

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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SUBJ: PROMOTION OF PORTUGUESE TOURISM INDUSTRY

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1. GOP HAS LAUNCHED MAJOR EFFORT TO REJUVENATE ITS FOREIGN TOURISM SECTOR. IT RECOGNIZES THAT TOURISM IS A MAJOR, IF NOT MOST, IMPORTANT SHORT-TERM MEANS OF RAPIDLY EARNING FOREIGN EXCHANGE. MINISTER OF FOREIGN TRADE AND TOURISM, JORGE CAMPINOS, HAS TAKEN PERSONAL INTEREST IN AND RESPONSIBILITY FOR THIS CAMPAIGN.

2. AMBASSADOR AND EMBASSY OFFICERS HAVE HAD SERIES OF DISCUSSIONS WITH MINISTER CAMPINOS, GOVERNMENT TOURISM OFFICIALS AND REPRESENTATIVES OF THE PRIVATE TOURISM INDUSTRY. WE HAVE CONSISTENTLY EXPRESSED OUR SUPPORT FOR THE GOP EFFORT AND OFFERED APPROPRIATE ASSISTANCE. FOLLOWING THESE DISCUSSIONS, MINISTER CAMPINOS, ADDRESSED LETTER TO AMBASSADOR STATING THAT GOP PLANS TO TAKE FOLLOWING ACTIONS :

A) LAUNCH A MASSIVE PUBLICITY CAMPAIGN TO US NEWS MEDIA;

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B) PREPARE A SHORT FILM, AND SUBSEQUENTLY DISTRIBUTE IT IN THE US, ON PORTUGAL'S TOURIST ATTRACTIONS;

C) NEGOTIATE WITH MAJOR US TOUR OPERATORS ON THE PREPARATION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF ONE-STOP CHARTER PROGRAMS TO PORTUGAL;

D) BRING A NUMBER OF LARGE TOUR OPERATOR REPRESENTATIVES TO PORTUGAL IN ORDER TO FAMILIARIZE THEM WITH TOURIST POSSIBILITIES;

E) INVITE SEVERAL WELL KNOWN AMERICANS TO PORTUGAL AS A MEANS OF INCREASING PUBLICITY. IN THIS SAME CONTEXT, IT WOULD HOPE TO CONVINCE A POPULAR, NATION-WIDE US TV PROGRAM TO FILM ONE OF ITS SHOWS IN PORTUGAL. THE "JOHN CARSON SHOW" HAS BEEN MENTIONED;

F) HOST RECEPTIONS IN N.Y. FOR THE PRESS, TOUR OPERATORS AND TRAVEL AGENTS. WELL-KNOWN PORTUGUESE PERSONALITIES WOULD PARTICIPATE;

G) PROMOTE CORPORATE CONVENTIONS AND CONGRESSES IN PORTUGAL;

H) LAUNCH A DOMESTIC PROGRAM TO SENSITIZE PORTUGUESE PUBLIC TO IMPORTANCE OF FOREIGN TOURISM TO NATION'S ECONOMIC RECOVERY;

I) INSURE THAT HOTELS ARE PROPERLY PREPARED TO RECEIVE INCREASED NUMBERS OF TOURISTS;

J) PROVIDE SPECIAL TOURIST PRICES FOR GASOLINE, GIVING DISCOUNTS EQUAL TO THOSE OFFERED BY OTHER EUROPEAN NATIONS;

K) IMPROVE AIRPORT FACILITIES;

L) PROMOTE CHARTERED FLIGHTS FROM LARGE AMERICAN COMMUNITIES IN EUROPE.

3. IN ORDER TO PROMOTE THE SUCCESS OF THESE GOP EFFORTS, LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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WE RECOMMEND USG TAKE THE FOLLOWING ACTIONS:

A) CREATE AN AD-HOC INTER-DEPARTMENTAL COMMITTEE IN WASHINGTON TO COORDINATE USG SUPPORT FOR GOP TOURISM PROGRAM;

B) AUTHORIZE ESTABLISHMENT OF A USG/GOP BILATERAL COMMISSION ON TOURISM. US SIDE WOULD BE HEADED

BY AMBASSADOR AND COMPRISED OF EMBASSY STAFF PLUS
REPRESENTATIVES FROM WASHINGTON AD-HOC COMMITTEE;

C) OBTAIN TEMPORARY RELAXATION OF CAB DIRECTIVES
SETTING AN ANNUAL QUOTA OF 200 FOR TICKETS FREELY
DISTRIBUTED BY TAP. EMBASSY RECOMMENDS THAT QUOTA
BE SUSPENDED IN FEBRUARY IN ORDER THAT GOP MAY INVITE
LARGE NUMBER OF TOURIST AGENTS TO FORTHCOMING ASTA
CONFERENCE;

D) ENCOURAGE AMERICAN CELEBRITIES TO VISIT PORTUGAL;

E) AUTHORIZE USTS, AND ENCOURAGE US TOURIST AGENCY,
PARTICIPATION IN TOURISM FAIR THAT WILL TAKE PLACE
CONCURRENTLY WITH ASTA CONVENTION (SEE SEPTTEL);

F) URGE US DELEGATION TO INTERNATIONAL CONGRESS AND
CONVENTION ASSOCIATION (ICCA) MEETING IN MONACO
DURING FEBRUARY TO SUPPORT PORTUGUESE REQUEST THAT
ICCA ANNUAL CONVENTION THIS NOVEMBER TAKE PLACE IN
MADEIRA.

4. EMBASSY WISHES TO EMPHASIZE ITS DESIRE THAT USG
BE FORTHCOMING IN SUPPORTING GOP TOURIST EFFORTS.
IF SUCCESSFUL, THIS PROGRAM COULD SIGNIFY A SIGNIFICANT
RAPID INCREASE IN PORTUGAL'S FOREIGN EXCHANGE EARNINGS.
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